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BOOK REVIEWS

The Teaching of Latin and Greek in the Secondary School. By CHARLES E. BENNETT and GEORGE P. BRISTOL. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. Pp. 336. Price, \$1.50.

THE first volume of the "American Teacher Series" to issue from the press is Bennett and Bristol's *Teaching of Latin and Greek in the Secondary School*. The teaching of Latin and the teaching of Greek are treated separately, the former by Professor Chas. E. Bennett, the latter by Professor George P. Bristol, both of Cornell University. The general plan of treatment is the same in both parts, namely, the discussion of the educational value of each subject, its place in the school curriculum, and the selection and arrangement of the materials in the course, hints on methods of instruction, and miscellaneous information of interest to the teacher. Within these limits each of the authors has acted independently of the other. Indeed, in some matters (for example, the question of pronunciation) they are at variance. The book is written, on the whole, from the standpoint of the secondary school and will be found to contain many valuable suggestions for classical teachers.

One of the most commendable features of Professor Bennett's portion of the book is the sturdy opposition which he makes against methods which attempt to render the study of Latin easy at the expense of accuracy. It is to be hoped that his insistence upon thoroughness may serve to counteract a tendency among some teachers to carry kindergarten methods into the secondary school. This portion of the book contains a great deal of information which will be found helpful to the teacher of Latin; much of this, however, is rendered relatively unimportant by reason of the undue amount of space which the author has devoted to polemics on the subject of ictus, sight-reading the Roman method of pronunciation, the length of the grammar, and Latin composition. In some of these matters his attitude is likely to increase rather than diminish the teacher's difficulties. In all of them he has taken an extreme position held by few educators. For this reason it is to be regretted that the stamp of approval has to some extent been placed upon his views by reason of the fact that the book is to form a part of an important series.

The greater part of his chapter on prosody is devoted to an attempt to disprove the current belief that ictus is stress. His claim is that it is nothing more than quantitative prominence. This radical view is only two years old even with Professor Bennett (it was first formulated in the *American Journal of Philology*, Vol. XIX, No. 70), and, in consideration of the criticism with which it has met, is still to be regarded as not proven. A safer guide for the teacher is a paper by Professor W. G. Hale, entitled "Did Verse-Ictus Destroy Word-Accent in Latin Poetry?" (*Proceedings of American Philological Association*, Vol. XXIX, 1895), who, while believing in the existence of verse-ictus, suggests that for the beginner "it is best to fix the attention on quantity, word-accent, and sense-stress, the reason for the advice being that the ictus-habit is commonly so deeply planted that a quite sufficient residuum is sure to be left."

Considerable space is devoted to a vigorous attack upon Professor Hale's pamphlet, *The Art of Reading Latin*. Notwithstanding his nineteen pages of argument

Professor Bennett's position is hardly credible. He maintains that it is not desirable for the student to reach the point where he can understand the Latin sentence without translating. Consequently, any exercise which enables him to grasp the meaning of the sentence as he reads it is harmful; it destroys his stimulus to translation. His argument is not against excessive sight-reading, but against the use of it at all. We believe, however, that in actual practice, in nine cases out of ten, those students who are best able to understand a sentence without translating will also be found to give the best translation afterwards, unless the matter of translation has been totally neglected.

On the subject of composition, Professor Bennett is just enough in his criticism of the composition books of the Collar and Daniell type, in which the exercises are continuous, and based upon the text read. Experience has shown that they do not give a systematic knowledge of constructions. He is also right when he says that the different constructions should be taught, one at a time, by means of a large number of illustrative sentences. This method, however, if pursued exclusively — and Professor Bennett means that it should be — has also its limitations. It is possible, even if the method is strictly followed, for the student who is doing an exercise on the purpose clause, for instance, to put in his subjunctives mechanically. There is a *tertium quid* which avoids the defects of the exclusive use of either method, namely, the judicious alternating of exercises made up of detached sentences, and of continuous passages for translation. The continuous passage following upon every third or fourth exercise on individual constructions will serve to give the student a necessary review, and demands more discrimination in choosing between different constructions.

Professor Bennett is at considerable pains to advocate a short Latin grammar not to exceed three hundred pages, which should be learned by the student and not be used merely as a book of reference. Few teachers will disagree with his position in so far as the forms are concerned. These ought to be learned, and the sooner the better. Syntax, however, is not a matter which can be learned entirely by rule. The *understanding* of the moods and tenses is something which depends upon a correct feeling rather than the knowledge of brief rules. Much of the syntactical part of the grammar should be clearly understood rather than memorized. If a correct feeling for Latin constructions can be produced within the compass of a three hundred-page grammar, well and good. If not, an extra hundred pages or two added to this, if they produce the desired result, are not a loss but a gain.

Most startling of all is Professor Bennett's attitude on the Roman pronunciation. Although he admits that *we can today restore in its essential features the pronunciation of Latin as the Romans spoke it*, he maintains that *the adoption of the Roman pronunciation was a fundamental blunder, and its retention is likewise a serious mistake*. He bases this pessimistic view chiefly upon his experience with teachers in his summer courses, and seems in this discussion to have drifted away from the considerations of the secondary school, and to have allowed himself to be influenced by the difficulties which he finds in college. He ought in frankness to admit that summer classes are largely made up of older teachers who have had little opportunity, either in school or in college, of making themselves familiar with the Roman method. These are difficulties which are bound to continue, but in ever-diminishing quantity, until the present generation of teachers passes away. It is from the younger teachers that results are to be expected, and there are plenty of well-trained young teachers now in the secondary schools who are producing good results. The processes of the boy of

thirteen years are largely imitative, and, granted a teacher with a thorough training in the Roman pronunciation, the student's difficulties are not likely to be greater with the Roman pronunciation than with the English. Professor Bennett is entitled to his opinion on this subject, but we believe that his exploiting it in the present volume is ill-advised and likely to do harm without accomplishing the result which he hopes. The Roman pronunciation is here to stay, and the only effect of his *pronunciamento* will be to prolong the chaos of the past twenty years and deter a number of teachers from making the change. This matter of pronunciation is one in which there should be united action, and a view so radically retrogressive should have been discussed before several educational bodies before taking its place in a book which, the disclaimer in the preface to the contrary, may be regarded by some teachers as a manual. It is not unreasonable to expect a "Teacher Series" to represent general tendencies. We shall look with interest to see whether Professor Bennett has put his convictions into practice and is using the English pronunciation at Cornell.

To some of his chapters Professor Bennett has attached bibliographies which are sometimes quite extensive. This fact makes certain omissions all the more striking. These happen to occur especially in the case of people who have preceded the author or have most strongly differed from him; and, since the views expounded in these connections (as, *e. g.*, that both word-accent and verse-ictus should be given in reading Latin verse) are new to the great majority of readers, the omissions have the effect of making the views themselves seem in a peculiar sense to be those of the author, or to lend them a strength which they do not possess. Thus in the discussion of the retention of word-accent in reading poetry, no mention is made of the only considerable argument on the subject, the paper by Professor Hale referred to above, or of the full exposition on the practical side by the same author in "Notes on the Roman Pronunciation of Latin."¹ On the subject of syllabification (p. 75) in addition to a reference to Bennett's *Grammar* the author might also have referred the reader to a really important contribution to the question in Vol. VII of the *Harvard Studies* (1896), also by Professor Hale. Similarly, Professor Bennett's failure to mention in his chapter on prosody two articles by G. L. Hendrickson in the *American Journal of Philology* (Vol. XX, Nos. 2 and 4), written in answer to Professor Bennett's radical position on the question of ictus, will cause considerable surprise to those who followed the controversy in that journal in 1899. It is only fair that his readers should know that there was another side to the question.

Professor Bristol's portion of the volume possesses all the merits to be found in that of Professor Bennett's. It is at the same time free from radical views which are not generally accepted by educators. It is much more in keeping with what one naturally expects of a teachers' series, and is therefore a safer guide. He has confined himself strictly to the giving of helpful suggestions along lines which are generally recognized, and within smaller compass than Professor Bennett has furnished the teacher with much more detailed information in matters of importance in his work. The methods outlined are of a thoroughgoing sort. There is no dogmatism, however, in the statement of them, and he is always ready to admit that "the teacher is greater than any method," and that in the hands of an able teacher any method may be made to yield first-rate results.

F. W. SHIPLEY

¹ SCHOOL REVIEW, June 1898.